

THE REPUBLICAN BUDGET: HOMELAND SECURITY

After running up the largest deficit in our nation's history, Congressional Republicans are attempting to appear fiscally responsible by cutting \$6.3 billion in domestic discretionary spending as part of their \$2.6 trillion budget resolution. These cuts are not large enough to have any meaningful effect on the projected \$390 billion budget deficit, but they will cause great harm to millions of Americans. This fact sheet summarizes the effect of the Republican budget cuts on homeland security.

POLICE, FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS. On September 11th, the nation found that those who respond to fires and disaster – our hometown police, firefighters, and emergency responders – could not easily communicate with one another, put the lives of Americans and the brave men and women who work to protect us in greater danger. A recent survey by the National Fire Protection Association found that:

- ❑ Overall fire departments do not have enough portable radios to equip more than about half of the emergency responders on a shift.
- ❑ An estimated 1/3 of firefighters per shift are not equipped with self-contained breathing apparatus.
- ❑ Only about 1/4 of all fire departments can communicate with all of their partners.

Yet, the Republican budget cuts funding for programs that support our local police, firefighters and emergency responders by close to \$1 billion, or 20 percent. Funding for these groups since 9/11 has totaled about \$19.4 billion, or less than 20% of the \$98 billion identified by the Rudman-Hart report.

BORDERS AND PORTS AND SECURITY MANDATES. On both our southern and northern borders additional personnel and equipment are needed to improve our ability to detect people and things trying to enter our country to do us harm. Since 9/11, the Department of Homeland Security has increased staffing and monitoring of the northern border, in part by transferring people and equipment from other locations. Both the Patriot Act and the Intelligence Reform bill call for substantially increasing the number of border and immigration agents; the Intelligence Reform bill calls for a total of 2,800 new agents a year.

The Intelligence Reform bill also calls for: expediting the ability to check air passengers and carryon bags for explosives; expediting the installation of in-line explosive detection systems; and increasing detention bed space.

Last, the vulnerabilities at our ports and transit systems are well-known: the Coast Guard estimated that \$7 billion is needed to better secure our ports and the American Public Transportation Association estimates that over \$6 billion is needed to improve transit system security.

Yet, the Republican budget eliminates funding specifically for transit and port security (\$300 million was provided in 2005), cuts funding for in-line explosive detection systems (from \$475 million in 2005 to \$394 million in 2006), and proposes only 362 new border patrol and immigration agents.